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Ag in the Classroom



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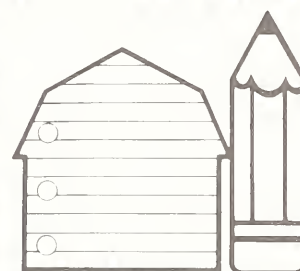


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Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

March/April 1989
Vol. 4, No. 3

New Kit Helps Students Face Career Choices

The American Farm Bureau Research Foundation has just released "The Choice is Yours," a career education software kit for grades 7-9.

Complete with a computer program, teacher's guide, in-class activities and a career wall chart, "The Choice is Yours" is designed to give students

a clearer picture of the opportunities and choices they will have as young adults. It helps students reflect how their own values, lifestyle preferences, personality traits, and skills can be parlayed into career choices.

Marsha Purcell, the Bureau's Director of Agricultural Education, says, "This kit focuses on the decision-making process. It encourages students to do some soul-searching, to think about their personalities and possible career paths."

"The Choice Is Yours" shows students how to organize and clarify personal preferences: Are they realistic? Artistic? Investigative? Social? Enterprising? Do they prefer the out-of-doors to the indoors? Would they like to work with others or by themselves? Do they like working with people, data or things?

The kit also presents students with a wide range of specific careers. "Although 'The Choice Is Yours' focuses on agricultural science fields and the emerging biotech sciences, the activities are broad based for any career," explains Purcell. "Some career suggestions on the wall chart, for instance, are not directly identified as careers in agriculture. It lists such career choices as lobbyist, veterinarian,

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Participate in the Smithsonian's Family Farm Program!

"The Family Farm: An American Tradition" is the working title for public programs and outreach efforts planned by the Smithsonian's Office of Folklife Programs during 1989-91. Family farm traditions will be featured at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife on the National Mall, Washington, D.C., for 10 days, late June through early July.

Education specialist Betty Belanus of the Smithsonian Office of Folklife Programs says the Smithsonian plans to produce record albums, a book, a documentary film, a national symposium and a variety of educational materials. "These products will be based on documentary field work, including taped interviews, photographs and writ-

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From the Director

Dear Readers,

Ag in the Classroom (AITC) programs are reaching thousands of teachers and students each year because of the energy and resourcefulness of AITC workers across the country.

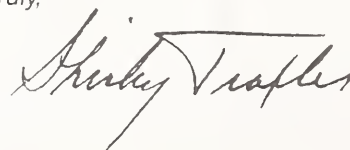
This major national movement, with activities in all 50 states, Guam and the Virgin Islands has the support and involvement of national agriculture organizations, educator groups and government. And the program is gaining international attention. Canada had its second annual AITC conference this past year and there have been inquiries about the program from Japan, Africa, Yugoslavia and Hungary.

If you are actively involved in Ag in the Classroom as a state contact, task force member or

volunteer, plan to attend the USDA sponsored National Ag in the Classroom Conference in Crystal City, just across the river from our nation's capitol, June 4-6, 1989. You will hear about successful programs, see the latest materials, talk to educators, and learn the secrets of success from experts during round table discussions.

Please complete and return the National AITC Conference registration form below before April 15. For additional information, contact the AITC office, 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20024. Telephone (202) 447-5727.

Yours truly,



Shirley Traxler

Career Choices

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association executive and attorney. It's interesting to see which careers are linked to agriculture."

The teacher's guide explains how the program is designed to help students overcome stereotypes commonly associated with agribusiness. It says that while farming and ranching are the most visible parts of agribusiness, they account for only one sixth of agribusiness careers. According to the guide, the U.S. Department of Labor *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* lists more than 700 job titles

related to agriculture, including horticultural worker, park ranger, plant biochemist and food technologist.

Purcell says "The Choice Is Yours" is suitable for many subject areas, including career education, psychology, vocational classes and sciences. "It's even applicable to language arts — one activity includes a job application letter!"

"The Choice Is Yours" career education kits are available at \$15 each, including postage and handling. To order yours, write to Marsha Purcell, American Farm Bureau Research Foundation, 225 Touhy Avenue, Park Ridge, Illinois 60086. For more information, call (312) 399-5700.



Register Today for the 1989 AITC National Conference

If you plan to attend the 1989 Ag in the Classroom National Conference, please complete this form and return it to:

Heritage Travel Conference Service
985 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20024
Attention: Beatina Coe

Name _____

Telephone _____

Address _____

Please enclose with this form your payment of \$60 to cover conference costs including lunches on June 5th and June 6th and breakfast on June 6th. Make check or money order payable to Heritage Travel Conference Service.

The room rate is \$91.00 + 9.5% tax for single or double rooms. If you are sharing a room, submit only one reservation.

All reservations must be accompanied by a one-night deposit in the form of a check, or the following credit card information:

Credit card name _____

Number _____

Expiration date _____

Your signature _____

Reservations should be made by April 15, 1989. If you need assistance with travel arrangements, call Heritage Travel, toll-free, at: 1-800-626-5200.

Spotlight

Teaching in a One-Room Country School



South Dakota, 1913
Recollections of Teacher Kitty Davis

One-room schools were a vital center for the people who lived in the country. In addition to their educational purpose, the schools provided a gathering place for small communities. Elections were held there, traveling entertainers sometimes gave programs, and Saturday night dances were common, with music provided by a violinist or a concertina player. Lights for evening gatherings were kerosene lanterns or wall lamps. Square dancing was most popular, as rough floors were not conducive to ball room dances such as waltzes or two-steps.

Schools in the country were far apart and usually situated among a cluster of three or four houses where children lived. Some teachers were barely 17 — as I was — and had just graduated from school. At that time, one was only required to pass a state written examination to be qualified as a teacher.

My first teaching experience was at a school about five miles from my home. For those who lived in the country, there were only two means of transportation, by horse or by foot, and towns were far apart. It would have been impossible for me to walk that distance, so I rode horseback on my

beautiful sorrel and white horse I called "Agate."

Material for clothing was either cotton, wool or silk and sewn by the mothers and grandmothers. Pants or slacks for women were unheard of at that time, but for riding a horse, divided skirts somewhat similar to modern day culottes were common.

When the weather turned cold, I had to get to the school house early enough to build a fire in the pot bellied stove which was in one corner of the room. Sometimes in very cold weather, one of the neighbors would have a fire going when I arrived, which was very welcome.

I had ten or twelve pupils and all grades, one through eight. There was no running water. Water had to be carried in a pail from an outside well fitted with a pump, and children drank out of the pail from the same dipper. There was also a wash basin where the children could wash their hands with a bar of yellow soap and dry them on a rough towel.

School began with the teacher ringing the bell at nine o'clock to call the pupils in. They entered in quiet, orderly lines and went to their seats. Every day the students said the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a song or a prayer. Sometimes the teacher would read a story or poem. There was a recitation bench in front of the room where pupils sat while reciting their lessons when classes were called. The first called was usually eighth grade arithmetic, followed by reading classes beginning with first grade. Then the rest of the arithmetic classes were called.

Recess time, a fifteen minute break where games were played outside, followed. Younger children played games such as London Bridge, Pom Pom Pullaway, Drop the Handkerchief or Hide and Seek. Older boys played catch or baseball.

Busy work was provided for first and second grades, such as sewing cards, outlining pictures with colored corn kernels, or coloring pictures with colored crayons. Subjects studied were language, history, geography, physiology, arithmetic and spelling. Each day closed with penmanship practice for all grades. At noon pupils enjoyed an hour recess during which time they ate their lunches, which were brought to school in tin pails. Sandwiches and cookies or cake was the usual lunch. At four o'clock school was over for the day. Most families lived no more than two miles away, so pupils walked to and from school.

Most holidays were celebrated. At Christmas time, a program of songs and recitations by the scholars, and sometimes a play, would be per-

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One-Room School

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formed. Usually on Valentines Day, a box supper was held where women would bring gayly decorated boxes of food to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Suppers brought by the prettiest girl, or the best cook, always brought in the highest bid. Of course, whoever bought the box got to share it with the gal who brought it.

Most teachers boarded with one of the families, and like Laura in "Little House on the Prairie" walked home, or traveled by horse as I did. Teachers were usually young girls just out of school, or maiden ladies. Married ladies did not work outside their homes.

The school year, which at that time ran only seven months, usually ended with a picnic with food provided by the various families. The women

visited, and the men played baseball. Sometimes there was a tearful goodbye if a popular teacher was leaving either to go to another school or, quite often, to get married, as I did, to a young cowboy who rode for the Diamond A Cattle Company that had large herds of cattle roaming the prairies.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Kitty Davis sent me a narrative about her experience teaching in a one-room school in South Dakota from 1913 to 1915. Kitty is 91 years old and still visits elementary classrooms to tell students about what it was like to attend school in the old days. She also conducts class once a year in a one-room country school that was moved from its original location into town by the Princeton, Minnesota Historical Society.

I hope you enjoy her story. She is a great teacher, and an even greater mother to me and my six brothers and sisters.

African Educators Get Hooked on AITC

The AITC message has universal appeal, as evidenced by a request from visiting African educators who want to learn more about the program.

"They asked a million questions!" said Helen Jenkins of the Mississippi Farm Bureau. Jenkins hosted a group of the visitors as part of "Operation Crossroads," a six-week program exploring vocational and technical education in the United States.

The U.S. Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs sponsored the event, which took place September 26 through November 4. African educators from elementary school to college level participated in a five-day orientation in New York, then divided into small groups to observe innovations in curriculum design methods throughout the United States.

The Mississippi Chamber of Commerce con-

tacted Jenkins when the delegation visiting the State requested information about AITC. She and Berta White, Mississippi and American Farm Bureau Women's Chairman, met with the delegation in a lively, half-day information exchange.

Information packets and other materials were distributed to the group, and the discussion ranged from teacher training workshops to the use of videos. The educators offered to share information from their homeland with their U.S. counterparts as well.

Jenkins has since received a letter from the group, requesting more AITC information as it develops. "It was enlightening to us," said Jenkins of the Africans' excitement about AITC. "They were so interested!"

Ag in the Classroom State Contact Helen Jenkins (seated left) and Berta White, Mississippi and American Farm Bureau Women's Chairman (seated right) pose with African educators and a representative from the U.S. State Department. The women spent a productive day sharing Ag in the Classroom information with their African visitors.



The world is growing faster than its trees.

To bring this and other environmental challenges into the state's classrooms, Florida Ag in the Classroom joined the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Forestry and the Florida Department of Education in sponsoring the Trees for Life Program. Through this program, over 125,000 pine seedlings were distributed to every fifth grade student in Florida's public schools.

"By giving each student a pine seedling, we gave them the opportunity to invest in their own environmental future," said Commissioner of Agriculture Doyle Conner. "If these seedlings actively involve young people in environmental protection, they will indeed be 'Trees for Life.'"

In addition to distributing the pine seedlings, program coordinators worked closely with Department of Education representatives to develop educational packets for teachers to share with their students. These educational materials, consisting of five lessons, were mailed to the schools before the seedlings. The lessons included activities designed to enhance students' understanding of the role trees play in a healthy environment.

According to state contact Jodi Chase, one school liked the Trees For Life Program so much it took the idea one step further. "Fifth grade teachers from Bauder Elementary School in Seminole, Florida, had each student 'adopt' a tree. They made up adoption certificates for the trees, and assigned each student responsibility for a 'baby' tree. The teachers hope to have a mini pine forest by the time these students graduate from high school!"

Across the state, the Trees for Life program has

provided an ideal opportunity for teachers to discuss current environmental health issues with their students, including global warming due to the greenhouse effect, ozone depletion and deforestation. Fifth graders are particularly receptive to environmental information because children their age are becoming increasingly aware of their surroundings and the importance of plants.

Trees for Life kicked off with the passage of a Cabinet resolution declaring February 20-25, 1989, as Florida Plant a Tree for Life Week. The Division of Forestry personnel statewide assisted where possible in classroom presentations during the "planting week."

"Our children are our hope for a better tomorrow," Conner said. "By giving them these seedlings, we put their futures in their hands."



Guide Helps Students Take Pride in America

"Take Pride in America" (TPIA) is a national public awareness campaign to encourage Americans to care for our public and private, natural and cultural resources. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently completed a TPIA educational package designed to increase community involvement of education and youth groups nationwide.

"The Leader's Guide provides a new way to excite kids in the classroom," said TPIA Director Ronn E. Hunt. "It's a good way to introduce students to science and conservation and to help urban-oriented students become interested in our natural resources."

The guide is comprised of activities to motivate young people to respect and care for our cultural and natural resources. Although national in scope, TPIA is a local community effort to see and solve some of the abuses and misuses of community resources. TPIA projects include beautification of community parks and historic sites, conservation activities, recycling efforts, cleanup projects and a host of other activities.

More than 26,000 environmental science, earth science and government teachers will receive a copy of the guide, as well as leaders in Future Farmers of America (FFA), 4-H and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

"Our Educational Leader's Guide should give us an entree into numerous schools and to teachers we're not in contact with now," Hunt explained. "Our goal is for each of these groups to initiate local 'Take Pride' projects."

A supplemental video features the musical group The Oak Ridge Boys singing the TPIA theme song, discussing projects with young people from the FFA, 4-H and Boy Scouts, and offering a challenge to American youth. The video may be purchased for \$24.58 from The Dub Center, 51 New Plant Court, Owings Mills, MD 21117. Phone 1-800-382-0080.

"The real importance of the package is to build community spirit and develop a neighborly concern for local resources," Hunt said. "It's to encourage working with neighbors for the common good."



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Wheat threshing at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife. The festival has highlighted traditional agricultural practices from around the world since 1967.

ten observations. The information was collected by folklorists, community developers, rural sociologists, cultural anthropologists and others at local, state and regional levels.

"We're inviting teachers and students everywhere to help us build an awareness of the family farm. We'd welcome any information, classroom activities or ideas relating to our program," Belanus

explains. "We also would like to hear from teachers interested in receiving resources, so we can tailor materials to their needs."

If your class or group has carried out any projects centered around family farming traditions, or if you are interested in getting involved documenting family farm life, the Office of Folklife programs would like to hear from you. For information about the Family Farm program and other folklife topics, contact: Betty J. Belanus, Education Specialist, Office of Folklife Programs, 2600 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20560; (202) 287-3541.



Courtesy Smithsonian Institution

Vedalia Centennial Commemorates Biological Control



A century ago, California's fledgling citrus groves succumbed to attack by a major plant pest, the cottony cushion scale. USDA researchers discovered that Australia's vedalia beetle was a natural enemy of the pest. Within months of the beetle's importation, the invasion was brought into check, and biological control in the U.S. was born.

The Vedalia Centennial, commemorating 100 years of biological control, is being celebrated by USDA March 20-24, 1989.

The Department's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Agricultural Research Service will host the week-long event at the USDA Administration building in Washington, D.C., with displays and exhibits that chart the development of biological control from its success with the vedalia beetle to its applications today.

Biological control uses predatory beetles, aggressive parasites, and deadly disease organisms which have a natural tendency to attack specific pests. Today's modern techniques strengthen USDA's ability to find and spread beneficial organisms safely and effectively.

For more information on the Vedalia Centennial and biological pest control, contact Max Heppner, USDA/APHIS, 6505 Belcrest Road, Room 609, Hyattsville, MD, 20782. Phone (301) 436-5222.

Teacher's Manual Rich with Activities — Utah Style

MAR./APR. 1989

Want to dress up like a cowboy? Make soap from lard? Write with a quill pen? Eat beef jerky?

What sounds like a tough day on the prairie is really all in a day's work for Utah teachers, who, with the help of a new teacher's guide, can meet their core curriculum, let students try new and exciting activities, and teach about agriculture at the same time.

"Utah Agriculture and Me" is a teacher's manual which was recently produced by the Utah Ag in the Classroom Committee, the State Department of Agriculture and Utah State University. Two thousand copies have been distributed to classrooms throughout the state in an effort to give teachers new ideas for teaching about agriculture. "We're giving them interesting options," says El Shaffer, Chairman of the Utah Ag in the Classroom Committee.

The Edith Bowen Elementary School on the campus of Utah State University has been the test classroom for "Utah Agriculture and Me." In-service training of teachers has begun there, and the manual is being used in schools throughout the state this semester. Based on the field-testing, the teacher's guide will be revised this summer and the new version will be distributed to every K-6 classroom in Utah by the fall.

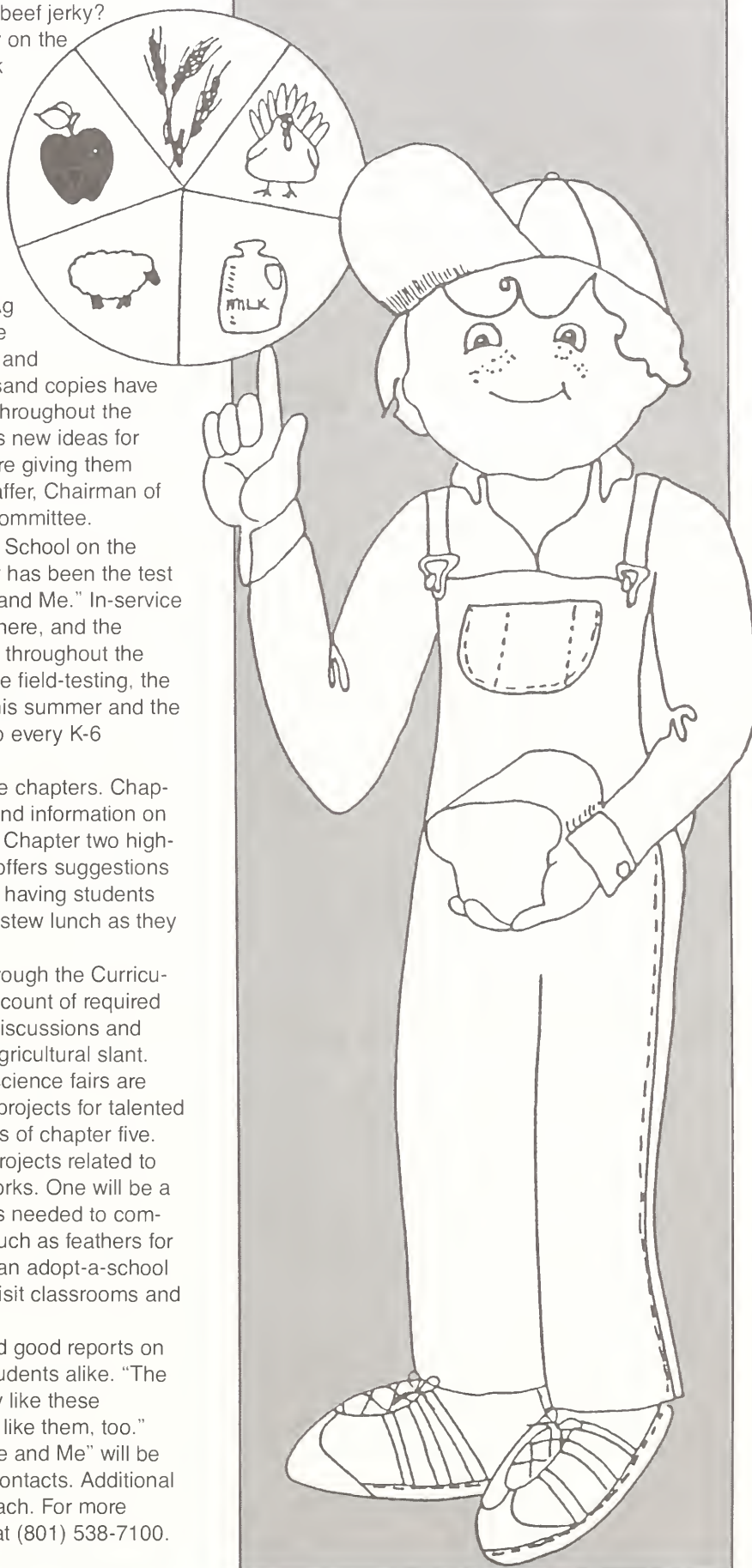
The guide is divided into three chapters. Chapter one gives teachers background information on agriculture and its commodities. Chapter two highlights agricultural products and offers suggestions for classroom activities, such as having students wear cowboy gear and eat beef stew lunch as they learn about cows.

Chapter three, "Wheeling Through the Curriculum," gives a grade-by-grade account of required state curriculum and suggests discussions and activities to fulfill them with an agricultural slant. Agriculturally-related topics for science fairs are highlighted in chapter four, and projects for talented and gifted students are the focus of chapter five.

Shaffer says two upcoming projects related to the teacher's guide are in the works. One will be a source for the different materials needed to complete the suggested activities, such as feathers for making quill pens. The other is an adopt-a-school program by farm couples who visit classrooms and host students on their farms.

Thus far, Shaffer has received good reports on the guide, from teachers and students alike. "The kids that are hard to reach really like these projects," he reports. "Teachers like them, too."

One copy of "Utah Agriculture and Me" will be sent free of charge to all state contacts. Additional copies are available for \$2.00 each. For more information, contact El Shaffer at (801) 538-7100.



Ag in the Classroom — State Contacts

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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